United Nations E/C.19/2010/11

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
1 February 2010

Original: English

Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
Ninth session
New York, 19-30 April 2010
Item 3 of the provisional agenda
Discussion on the special theme: "Indigenous peoples: development with culture and identity: articles 3 and 32 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples"

Indigenous peoples and boarding schools: a comparative study

Note by the secretariat

Summary

At its sixth session, the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues recommended that an expert undertake a comparative study on indigenous peoples and boarding schools (see E/2007/43-E/C.19/2007/12, para. 70). The study was completed in 2008. At its seventh session, the Permanent Forum welcomed the study and requested that it be made available as a document for the ninth session in all official languages of the United Nations (see E/2009/43-E/C.19/2009/14, para. 68). The present document is a summary version of the full report on indigenous peoples and boarding schools (E/C.19/2009/CRP.1).

10-22536 (E) 250210

Please recycle

Contents

		Page
I.	Historical overview of boarding schools	3
	A. United States of America	3
	B. Canada	4
	C. Latin America and the Caribbean	4
	D. Australia	6
	E. New Zealand	6
	F. Scandinavia	7
	G. Russian Federation	9
	H. Asia	9
	I. Middle East	11
	J. Africa	12
II.	The current situation, practices and ideologies of boarding schools	13
	A. North America	13
	B. Australia	14
	C. Asia	14
	D. Latin America	16
	E. Russian Federation	17
	F. Scandinavia	18
	G. Africa	18
	H. New Zealand	19
III.	Conclusion	19

I. Historical overview of boarding schools*

A. United States of America

1. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Native American children were forcibly abducted from their homes to attend Christian and Government-run boarding schools as a matter of state policy. The boarding school system became more formalized under President Grant's peace policy of 1869-1870, which turned over the administration of Indian reservations to Christian denominations. Funds were set aside to erect school facilities that were to be administered by churches and missionary societies.[1] These facilities were a combination of day schools and boarding schools erected on Indian reservations.

2. The first off-reservation boarding school, Carlisle, was founded in 1879. Children were taken far from their homes at an early age and not returned to their homes until they were young adults. By 1909, there were over 25 off-reservation boarding schools, 157 on-reservation boarding schools and 307 day schools in operation.[2] Thousands of native children were forced into attending these schools.

3. The rationale for off-reservation boarding schools was "kill the Indian in order to save the man", as well as "transfer the savage-born infant to the surroundings of civilization, and he will grow to possess a civilized language and habit".[3] The strategy was to separate children from their parents, inculcate them with Christianity and white cultural values and encourage or force them to assimilate into the dominant society. For the most part, the schools primarily prepared native boys for manual labour or farming and native girls for domestic work. Children were also involuntarily leased out to white homes as menial labour, rather than being sent back to their homes, during the summer.

4. Boarding schools were administered as inexpensively as possible. Children were given inadequate food and medical care, and conditions were overcrowded. According to the Boarding School Healing Project, native children in South Dakota schools were rarely fed; as a result, they routinely died in mass numbers of starvation and disease. Other children died from common medical ailments owing to medical neglect.[4] In addition, children were often forced to do grueling work in order to raise money for the schools and salaries for the teachers and administrators. Children were never compensated for their labour.

5. Many survivors reported being sexually abused by multiple perpetrators in these schools; however, boarding school officials refused to investigate, even when teachers were publicly accused by their students.[5] There are reports that both male

---

* The present document contains a summary version of the study prepared by Andrea Smith.

[1] See Jorge Noriega, "American Indian education in the United States: indoctrination for subordination to colonialism", in *State of Native America: Genocide, Colonization and Resistance*, M. Annette Jaimes, ed. (Boston, South End Press, 1992).

[2] See David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928* (Lawrence, Kansas, University Press of Kansas, 1995).

[3] Cited in Frances Paul Prucha, *Americanizing the American Indian: Writings by the "Friends of the Indian", 1880-1900* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1973).

[4] See Boarding School Healing Project, *Shadow Report for the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination* (2007).

[5] See Jeff Hinkle, "A law's hidden failure", *American Indian Report*, vol. 19, No. 1 (2003).

and female school personnel routinely abused native children, sometimes leading to suicides among these children.[4]

B. Canada

6. Full-scale efforts to "civilize" aboriginal peoples in Canada did not begin until British hegemony was fully established in 1812. In 1846, the Government resolved to fully commit to Indian residential schools. The State and the churches collaborated in efforts to "civilize" Indians in order to solve the "Indian problem". In 1889, the Indian Affairs Department was created, and Indian agents were dispatched to aboriginal communities. These agents would threaten to withhold money from aboriginal parents if they did not send their children to school. Parents were even imprisoned if they resisted schooling their children. Indian agents prepared lists of children to be taken from reserves and organized round-ups at the commencement of the school year.[6]

7. As in the United States of America, residential schools focused on industrial education, including agriculture and trades for boys and domestic training for girls, rather than academics. These schools were to be set up far away from the communities of aboriginal children so that the children would not be influenced by their native cultures. By 1896, there were 45 church-run residential schools in Canada.[7]

8. Christian religion was mandatory in the schools. Sanitary and physical conditions were poor, leading to a high disease rate; outbreaks of tuberculosis were common. Children were also physically and sexually abused, forced into hard labour and frequently whipped and beaten if they spoke aboriginal languages or expressed aboriginal cultural identity.[8]

9. Residential schooling reached its peak in 1931, with over 80 schools in Canada. From the mid-1800s to the 1970s, about one third of aboriginal children were confined to schools for the majority of their childhoods. The last school closed in 1984.

C. Latin America and the Caribbean

10. Given the diverse countries in the Latin American and Caribbean region, boarding school patterns were not as uniform as in the United States and Canada. Generally, it appears that most boarding schools were set up by Christian missions as part of a "civilization" process. In the south-eastern Peruvian Amazon, schooling was monolingual and monocultural in the Spanish language. In the 1950s, the Arakmbut peoples were forced to live near Catholic missions after having been decimated by disease. During the boom period of the rubber industry, the Dominican

---

[6] See Suzanne Fournier and Ernie Crey, *Stolen from Our Embrace: The Abduction of First Nations Children and the Restoration of Aboriginal Communities* (Vancouver, Douglas and McIntyre, 1998).

[7] Ibid.; John Milloy, *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879 to 1986* (Winnipeg, University of Manitoba Press, 1999).

[8] See Celia Haig-Brown, *Resistance and Renewal: Surviving the Indian Residential School* (Vancouver, Arsenal Pulp Press, 1988).

missionaries became particularly involved in trying to pacify them through education. Arakmbut children were obliged to attend mission schools far away from their parents, and forced to learn Spanish.[9]

11. Mexico's education policy in the 1800s and early 1900s focused on the assimilation of indigenous peoples and teaching them to speak Spanish; however, some reformers advocated for bilingual education as a means of effectively assimilating indigenous peoples. In the 1960s, in the rural community of Kuchmil in the Yucatán region, the Government of Mexico set up *internados*, or boarding schools, that would teach children Spanish and provide food, clothing and shelter. Indigenous peoples were attracted to the system because they desired schools that would prepare their children for wage employment and teach them the skills necessary to negotiate State and local bureaucracies.[10]

12. In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, religious orders would sign contracts with Governments to sanction missionary activity. The Capuchin order, for instance, was given educational, political and civil authority over territories in its contracts. From the 1920s until the 1970s, the order set up boarding schools and day schools for the Warao peoples. In the 1970s, however, the administration of schools was turned over to Government authorities. Missionaries often spoke Warao, but would address students only in Spanish. Today, schools are being built in the communities, but attending them is difficult for many who live in outlying areas that are reachable only by watercraft. Use of the Spanish language was strictly enforced in schools among the Guarani in Paraguay, beginning in 1812.[11]

13. Until the 1970s, Colombia provided funding to nine different Catholic orders to educate indigenous groups. These Catholic groups set up missions where they separated children from their families from the age of 5. The Capuchin order was widespread in Colombia as well. Children were not allowed to speak their native languages, visit their families or wear their traditional clothing. In some regions, the missions gave money and land to those who married outside their group. In the 1970s, the State finally recognized the need for culture-specific education and began hiring and training indigenous teachers.[12]

14. In Brazil, the Jesuits opened up a mission post among the Manoki peoples in 1949 and relocated the children to Utiariti. Others followed to escape the devastation wrought by massacres and disease. The Manoki peoples were divided into groups based on age and gender and supervised by a priest or a nun in all activities. They were prohibited from speaking their own languages and were encouraged to intermarry. Everyone had to work in the mission and engage in

---

[9] See Sheila Aikman, "Language, literacy and bilingual education: an Amazon people's strategies for cultural maintenance", *International Journal of Educational Development*, vol. 15, No. 4 (October 1995).

[10] See M. Bianet Castellanos, "Adolescent migration to Cancún: reconfiguring Maya households and gender relations in Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula", *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, vol. 28, No. 3 (2007).

[11] See Luisa Margolies, "Notes from the field: missionaries, the Warao and populist tendencies in Venezuela", *Journal of Latin American Anthropology*, vol. 11, No. 1 (April 2006).

[12] See Silvina Gvirtz and Jason Beech, *Going to School in Latin America* (Westport, Connecticut, Greenwood Press, 2007).

business operations that profited the mission. The Manoki peoples stayed in Utiariti until the school was dismantled in 1968.[13]

D. Australia

15. Since the beginning of European colonization in Australia, successive Governments and missionaries targeted indigenous children for removal from their families in order to "inculcate European values and work habits in children, who would then be employed in service to the colonial settlers".[14] The Government specifically targeted indigenous children of mixed descent for removal. The rationale was that indigenous children with lighter skin colour could be more easily assimilated into non-indigenous society. Meanwhile, "full-blood" Aboriginal people were thought to be a dying race. Many children of mixed descent were totally separated from their families. During the period from 1910 to 1970, between 10 and 30 per cent of indigenous children were removed from their families. By the mid-1930s, more than half of the so-called "half-caste" children were housed in institutions administered by the State.[15]

16. Christian churches were at the forefront of this practice. In the late 1940s, some 50 missions operated throughout Australia. Similar patterns emerged: education focused on Christianization and manual labour rather than preparation for higher education. Abuse was prevalent, and schools were poorly maintained.[16] Conditions were deplorable in these missions and settlements, with death rates often exceeding birth rates. Disease, malnutrition and sexual violence were commonplace. Children were often forced to work in the homes of white people, where they were routinely sexually abused.

E. New Zealand

17. Following the 1840 signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, which established New Zealand as a British Crown colony, the State began to use education as a means to "civilize" the Maori peoples. The colonial State subsidized churches to administer missionary schools. The 1847 Education Ordinance encouraged the establishment of industrial boarding schools to remove Maori children from what was seen as their "primitive" cultures. Block grants were made available to church-based mission schools as long as they provided instruction in English rather than in Maori.

18. As Maori resistance against settlers grew, however, they began to abandon boarding schools. The 1867 Native Schools Act allowed Maori schools to be established if there was a formal request by Maori, who also had to provide the land,

---

[13] See Rinaldo Arruda, "Menky Manoki: history of occupation and contact", May 2003. Available from http://pib.socioambiental.org/en/povo/menky-manoki/1916.

[14] See Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission of Australia, *Bringing Them Home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families* (Sydney, 1997).

[15] See Robert Manne, "Aboriginal child removal and the question of genocide, 1900-1940", in *Genocide and Settler Society: Frontier Violence and Stolen Indigenous Children in Australian History*, A. Dirk Moses, ed. (New York, Berghahn Books, 2004).

[16] See Quentin Beresford and Gary Partington, eds., *Reform and Resistance in Aboriginal Education* (Crawley, Australia, University of Western Australia Press, 2003).

half the cost of the buildings and a quarter of the salary of the teachers. By 1879, 57 Maori schools had been established. The Maori school system ran parallel to the public primary school system. Maori children could attend either, but only until they reached secondary school. The only avenue available for further education was Maori denominational boarding schools, with funding provided through scholarships from the Department of Education if parents could not pay the necessary fees. A significant feature of this school system was that the Maori themselves participated in its establishment.

19. The purpose of the Maori denominational boarding schools was to take those Maori students who seemed to have the highest potential for assimilation, inculcate them with European values and customs and then send the "assimilated" Maori students back home to "uplift" their communities. The goal was to create a class structure within Maori communities whereby the more "assimilated elite" could manage those parts of the community deemed "savage" by Europeans. Maori girls received particular attention because, since they were seen as the primary caretakers of children, they were in the best position to inculcate European values in the next generation.[17]

20. In 1941, in line with the desire to make secondary schooling available to all children, the State began to establish native district high schools intended for those Maori students who could not attend the denominational boarding schools. By 1950, there were 150 Maori schools. Eventually, however, the State recommended that there should be only one State school system, and the Maori school system was disbanded. This disbandment was not necessarily conducted in collaboration with Maori communities. Some supported the system, despite its faults, because it was a means by which to focus specifically on Maori educational needs.[18]

21. In 1900, 90 per cent of Maori children could speak Maori; by 1960, only 26 per cent of Maori children could speak their language. Since a 1986 landmark case brought before the Waitangi Tribunal, the right to language has gained increased legitimacy, spurring language revitalization in schools. Since 1984, Maori peoples have gained increased opportunities to receive Government monies to fund Maori-based educational initiatives. In 1988, a Royal Commission report claimed that the educational system had purposely introduced assimilation policies that oppressed Maori culture and language, and called for culturally relevant and bilingual Maori education.[19]

F. Scandinavia

22. Lutheran missionaries arrived in Samiland during the seventeenth century and encouraged the Sami to speak Finnish, the missionary language. It was the desire of missionaries to "save" the Sami peoples from their heathen ways, and several

---

[17] See Judith Simon and Linda Tuhiwai Smith, eds., *A Civilising Mission?: Perceptions and Representations of the New Zealand Native Schools System* (Auckland, Auckland University Press, 2001); Kay Morris Matthews and Kuni Jenkins, "Whose country is it anyway?: The construction of a new identity through schooling for Maori in Aotearoa/New Zealand", *History of Education*, vol. 28, No. 3 (September 1999).

[18] See Simon and Smith, *A Civilising Mission?*.

[19] See Wharehuia Hemara, *Maori Pedagogies: A View From the Literature* (Wellington, New Zealand Council for Educational Research Press, 2000).

Christian schools were established in Samiland. The goal of these educational establishments was to educate Sami men in the ways of Christianity so that they could then return to their homes as missionaries. The missionaries did not set up an educational system for all Sami children, but their training schools served as precursors for later educational systems established in Samiland.[20]

23. As nation States began to develop in the areas inhabited by the Sami, they began to establish special schools to assimilate the Sami peoples into the dominant culture. Established originally by Christians, these schools would later come under the control of the Governments of the nation States. Although many of the schools established were for Sami children in Norway, there were also such schools in Finland and Sweden. Both Norway and Sweden passed laws prohibiting the use of the Sami language in schools and at home. In Finland (which had become an autonomous region under the Russian empire in 1809), assimilatory policies were not as explicitly articulated as in Norway or Sweden.[20]

24. The period of the boarding schools lasted from the nineteenth century until the 1960s, when the Sami peoples began to gain political power and recognition. First-hand accounts describe the boarding school experience, especially the process of being removed from homes at such an early age, as having been very traumatic; however, not all Sami peoples considered boarding schools to be a completely hostile environment. At the same time, the Sami peoples had already been subjected to a long period of Christianization, so, according to some Sami scholars, the process was not necessarily as disruptive as it was for indigenous children in other countries who were the first generation to be Christianized.[21]

25. In addition, these schools were not specifically for Sami children, but were mandatory for anyone who lived too far away to be able to attend a local school. Thus, these schools were actually mixed rather than Sami-specific. With some exceptions (such as special schools for the children of reindeer-herding Sami families in Sweden), anyone who lived in a geographically isolated area or who did not attend public school was mandated to attend a residential school. Boarding schools in Finland were not as regimented or brutal in terms of disciplinary control as elsewhere, most likely because in Finland the boarding school system also served Finnish students. Moreover, the boarding schools in Finland were generally smaller in size, and the focus was on academic training. Manual labour was not part of the daily school schedule. Still, the process of being removed from homes and prohibited from speaking the Sami language has resulted in cultural alienation, loss of language and lowered self-esteem.[21]

26. In Norway, children were not allowed to speak the Sami language in school until 1959. Since the late 1960s, many major changes have occurred within the school systems regarding Sami peoples. In the 1980s, many educational acts were passed that allowed Sami to be taught as a language of instruction. Since 1997, the

[20] See Rebecca Partida, "Suffering through the education system: the Sami boarding schools". Available from www.utexas.edu/courses/sami/dieda/hist/suffer-edu.htm (accessed 30 June 2008).

[21] See Rauna Kuokkanen, "'Survivance' in Sami and First Nations boarding school narratives: reading novels by Kerttu Vuolab and Shirley Sterling", *American Indian Quarterly*, vol. 27, No. 3 (summer/fall 2003).

Sami Education Council has opened several schools that focus on Sami content within the curriculum and conduct lessons in the Sami language.[22]

G. Russian Federation

27. In 1924, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics established the Committee of the North, designed to administer the affairs of northern minorities (indigenous groups were designated as "northern minorities", except for the Yakuts and the Komi, which had their own autonomous republics). At the beginning, the emphasis was on preserving traditional pathways, but eventually the policies moved towards forced assimilation.

28. In the 1920s, schools that included the teaching of indigenous languages were established among the 26 groups of indigenous peoples in the north. Thirteen alphabets were created, using the Roman alphabet for indigenous languages. By 1926, 18 residential schools were in place across Siberia, and five day schools had been established.[23] In 1937, however, northern alphabets were outlawed. After the Second World War, the Soviet Union began the process of Russification. Northern groups were forcibly settled into mixed areas in order to assimilate them and foster Russian unity. From the age of 2, northern indigenous children were forced to attend boarding schools where they were prohibited from speaking their languages. By 1970, no indigenous languages were being taught in schools.[24]

29. The boarding schools were originally designed for nomadic tribes so that they could receive a systematic education, but they soon became compulsory for all children. Children were taken away between the ages of 1 and 2, and returned when they were between 15 and 17 years old with no knowledge of their traditional communities. By the Second World War, 80 per cent of Evenki peoples were studying in residential schools and living away from their homes at least six months out of the year.[23] This policy deformed traditional family structures, leaving returned children without the skills to survive in their communities.

H. Asia

30. Many countries in Asia send indigenous children who live in remote areas to boarding schools. In Indonesia in 1996, the Social, Home Affairs, Education and Culture ministries, as well as the religion ministries, decided to provide financial aid and transportation for children living in remote areas so that they could attend boarding schools.[25] In West Kalimantan, for instance, the majority of secondary schoolchildren attended boarding schools in the capital of Lanjak, and only returned

---

[22] See Fernand de Varennes, "Indigenous Peoples and Language", *Murdoch University Electronic Journal of Law*, vol. 2, No. 1 (April 1995). Available from www.murdoch.edu.au/elaw/issues/v2n1/devarenn21.html.

[23] See Alexia Bloch, *Red Ties and Residential Schools: Indigenous Siberians in a Post-Soviet State* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003).

[24] See Nikolai Vakhtin, "Native peoples of the Russian far north" (London, Minority Rights Group, 1992).

[25] See Seameo Innotech, "Special education in Southeast Asia: general characteristics, legal framework, basic information, issues and challenges", 30 June 2008. Available from www.seameo-innotech.org/resources/seameo_country/SpEd_in_sea.htm.

home for weekends and holidays.[26] Viet Nam also utilizes boarding schools for indigenous children. The 1946 Constitution of Viet Nam supports the instruction of indigenous children in their own languages; however, national educational policies mandate the use of Vietnamese as the language of instruction.[27]

31. In the 1950s, Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia, Tibet, Ningxia and Guangxi — five provinces in China with large minority populations — were designated as autonomous minority nationality regions. They were granted increased local control over the administration of resources, taxes, birth planning, education, legal and jurisdictional issues and religious expression. During the Cultural Revolution, minority customs were denounced as "primitive", and schools in these regions were forced to teach in Mandarin only. Since 1978, however, the Government has adopted various measures to improve relationships with minorities. Some of the Government efforts include increasing educational opportunities for minority children by establishing boarding schools with some instruction conducted in local languages, increasing teacher salaries, lowering requirements in minority regions and offering affirmative action consideration for university admission.[28] Despite these efforts, the educational attainment of children in minority regions is far less than that of other children.

32. In India, indigenous or tribal peoples generally did not have access to education, for many reasons. Many tribal communities are geographically dispersed and did not have sufficient population densities to build schools in their communities. Tribal communities also lacked the financial resources to send children to school. Before 1980, literacy rates were around 8 per cent in many communities. Within this context, residential, or ashram, schools were developed for tribal children. These schools also shared some of the "civilization" assumptions of other boarding schools, namely that they could provide a better environment to develop a child's personality than his or her own community could.

33. In Malaysia, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs became responsible for administering the affairs of indigenous peoples in 1961. Government policy advocated the integration of indigenous peoples into the larger society, while also advocating the teaching of indigenous languages and public education designed to eradicate racism against indigenous peoples. These latter policies were not implemented. As part of the assimilation policies, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs began working with Islamic missionary societies to encourage the Islamization of indigenous peoples through various measures, including Islamic residential schools. In general, the Department of Aboriginal Affairs provides education for indigenous children between the first and third grades, after which they must go to boarding schools to receive further education.[29]

---

[26] See Michael Eilenberg, "Paradoxical outcomes of national schooling in the borderland of West Kalimantan, Indonesia: the case of the Iban", *Borneo Research Bulletin*, 1 January 2005. Available from www.accessmylibrary.com/coms2/summary_0286-16677841_ITM.

[27] See United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Innocenti Research Centre, "Ensuring the rights of indigenous children" (Florence, Italy, October 2003).

[28] See Bonnie Johnson, "The politics, policies and practices in linguistic minority education in the People's Republic of China: the case of Tibet", *International Journal of Educational Research*, vol. 33, No. 6 (2000); Uradyn Bulag, "Mongolian Ethnicity and Linguistic Anxiety in China", *American Anthropologist*, vol. 105, No. 4 (December 2003).

[29] See Robert Knox Dentan, et al., *Malaysia and the "Original People": A Case Study of the Impact of Development on Indigenous Peoples* (Needham Heights, Massachusetts, Allyn and Bacon, 1996).

I. Middle East

34. During the British mandate, a boarding school was set up for Palestinian Bedouin boys. The school was attended by the sons of the elite for the purpose of providing skills for future tribal leaders to be able to negotiate with colonial officials. A girls' school was opened in 1934. Many of the graduates of these schools became sheikhs or took up other prominent positions in society. The boys at the school were encouraged to retain their traditional tribal dress and were permitted to visit their families regularly. After the establishment of Israel, a few students attended a boarding school in Nazareth and became professionals in Bedouin society. Nowadays, however, most students leave school before reaching the twelfth grade. The curriculum is not culturally or linguistically relevant, and there is a shortage of schools. In a few of these schools, children live by themselves in makeshift boarding areas around the schools.[30] Similar types of makeshift boarding schools where children live by themselves and care for themselves exist among the Al Murrah peoples in Saudi Arabia. Students stay in a one-room schoolhouse when their families leave with their herds after the summer harvest. In another schoolhouse, boys share a wooden shelter while their families travel with their herds. Other tribal groups are developing similar spontaneous settlements.[31]

35. In Oman, the Government, in conjunction with the United Nations, began to sponsor development programmes for the Harasiis as oil companies began their operations. This development project included the establishment of a boarding school for boys (girls could attend on a day basis), as well as other service programmes. The boarding school has both primary- and secondary-level schooling, with enrolment climbing yearly. The goal is to provide skills to allow the Harasiis to expand their employment opportunities, particularly with the oil companies and the army. While the Harasiis supported these efforts, they also desired to maintain their traditional ways of life through animal husbandry, and they have requested that development schemes take this into account. At the same time, the Harasiis have expressed frustration that they have not been given jobs with the oil companies.[32] Another issue is the presumption that the Harasiis would not want their girls to board, and the insistence on gender segregation, which the Harasiis do not particularly support; hence, the community built its own makeshift dormitory for girls so that they could also attend boarding school.[33]

36. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, there are special boarding schools offered between the ninth and twelfth grades for children from tribal backgrounds who live far from the cities. Girls and boys attend different schools. These schools have strict

---

[30] See Aref Abu-Rabi'a, "A century of education: Bedouin contestation with formal education in Israel", in *Nomadic Societies in the Middle East and North Africa: Entering the 21st Century*, Dawn Chatty, ed. (Leiden, the Netherlands, Brill, 2006).

[31] See Donald Cole, "New homes, new occupations, new pastoralism: Al Murrah Bedouin, 1968-2003", in *Nomadic Societies in the Middle East and North Africa*.

[32] See Dawn Chatty, "Multinational oil exploitation and social investment: mobile pastoralists in the Sultanate of Oman", in *Nomadic Societies in the Middle East and North Africa*.

[33] See Dawn Chatty, *Mobile Pastoralists: Development Planning and Social Change in Oman* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1996).

entrance examinations and only admit exemplary students. Graduates of these schools are more likely to obtain professional jobs after graduation.[34]

J. Africa

37. Several countries in East Africa have set up special boarding schools, some specifically targeting girls. In Kenya, Christian denominations controlled 75 per cent of schools as late as 1955. Indigenous peoples are generally within the category of "marginalized groups". During the 1970s, Kenya set up the remote areas boarding programme to provide education by means of low-cost boarding schools. The schools were flooded by non-indigenous students, however, and the indigenous communities did not participate. In the late 1970s, Kenya decided to suspend the schools because of their ineffectiveness in educating pastoralists.[35] A number of factors, such as insecurity, armed conflict and school expenses, contributed to low participation. In various instances, boarding schools were in poor condition, lacked adequate water and proper safeguards for the protection of the children, particularly girls, and were overcrowded. Nevertheless, there are many communities that desire the expansion of boarding schools and are more directly involved in the promotion of education. There are some boarding schools for girls in Kenya that have large enrolments, although the overall impact on education is small.

38. In Eritrea, during the post-liberation period, the Eritrean Liberation Front involved communities in decision-making processes, including education. In recent years, higher priority has been given to expanding the provision of education in nomadic areas, including the development of boarding schools; however, while the communities help build skills and manage the operation of the schools, they are not currently involved in curriculum development. Teachers often try to adapt the curriculums to indigenous cultures, but frequently do not have the required training to do so.

39. In Sierra Leone, after the demise of legal slave trading, the London-based Church Missionary Society joined with the Government to create separate villages where children could be trained in trades, farming and, for the most promising, teaching or mission work. By separating children from their "uncivilized" parents, mission boarding schools were seen as a key strategy for inculcating children "untainted" by the influence of their parents with European and Christian values.[36]

40. Kwame Nkrumah, the first President of Ghana, introduced a policy of mass education and established dozens more secondary boarding schools throughout the country. In reports by the media, these schools are credited with helping to reduce the ethnic tensions that plague many other countries in the region. Others, however, have complained that this system is underfunded, there are problems with sexual

---

[34] See Julia Huang, "Integration, modernization and resistance: Qashqa'i nomads in Iran since the revolution of 1978-1979", in *Nomadic Societies in the Middle East and North Africa*.

[35] See Saverio Krätli, "Education provision to nomadic pastoralists", Institute of Development Studies working paper (Brighton, United Kingdom, 2001).

[36] See Caroline Bledsoe, "The cultural transformation of western education in Sierra Leone", *Africa*, vol. 62, No. 2 (1992).

abuse of girls in these schools, parents often cannot afford school fees and education is based on the colonial model.[37]

II. The current situation, practices and ideologies of boarding schools

A. North America

41. On 10 May 2006, the Government of Canada announced the Indian Residential Schools Settlement. This agreement was made between the Government of Canada, the Assembly of First Nations and legal representatives of both former residential school students and the churches involved in the schools. This settlement included a lump-sum payment for all survivors, which is a new process for dealing with serious claims of abuse.

42. Canada has also established a five-year truth and reconciliation commission on abuse in residential schools. Church officials from several denominations have also been part of a "Remembering the children" tour throughout Canada. On 11 June 2008, the Prime Minister of Canada officially apologized in the House of Commons for abuses in residential schools. There are currently no indigenous boarding schools operating in Canada.[38]

43. Boarding schools still operate today in the United States. Some are operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, some are administered by churches and some are under tribal control. Attendance is no longer mandatory, and native children are not forced to practice Christianity. Many schools that are under tribal control teach native languages and emphasize native cultural traditions.

44. Nonetheless, concerns remain about current boarding schools. According to the 2001 budget report of the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs, many reservation schools are structurally unsound and/or of insufficient size to educate incoming students. Only 65.5 per cent of native peoples graduate from high school, compared with 75.2 per cent for the United States population as a whole. Only 9.3 per cent of native students graduate from college, less than half the rate among the general population.[39]

45. Unlike Canada, the United States has made no attempt to address the legacy of abuse in boarding schools. In 2005, a class action lawsuit against the Government for abuse in boarding schools was dismissed. In 2007, the Jesuit order of Roman Catholic priests stated that it would pay approximately $5 million to 16 people who had stated that they had been sexually abused by clergy while attending a boarding school. Otherwise, there has been virtually no acknowledgment by the Government of its complicity in abuses in boarding schools.

---

[37] See Cecilia Sem Obeng, *Home Was Uncomfortable; School Was Hell* (Hauppauge, New York, Nova Publishers, 2002).

[38] See Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, "Prime Minister cites 'sad chapter' in apology for residential schools", 11 June 2008. Available from www.cbc.ca/canada/story/2008/06/11/aboriginal-apology.html.

[39] See International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, *The Indigenous World 2000/2001* (Copenhagen, Eks-Skolens Trykkeri, 2001).

B. Australia

46. In Australia today, there are private residential schools that cater to indigenous students. They can be expensive, however, and are generally church-administered, forcing children to participate in Christianity. In addition, they often cater only to the elites of indigenous communities.[40]

47. In 2008, the Prime Minister of Australia apologized in Parliament to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples for laws and policies that had "inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss". This apology singled out indigenous peoples who had suffered from the policies of forced removal. So far, this apology has not been accompanied by programmes for compensation, as was the case in Canada.

48. After the apology, the Indigenous Affairs Minister called for the continuation of the operation of boarding schools, saying that many indigenous peoples wanted them, particularly in remote areas where schools were not available. While it was not seen as a return to the missions, boarding schools could be established in remote communities to make sure children were properly fed, clothed and able to study.[41] Calls for boarding schools were also in response to the 2007 Government emergency intervention in indigenous communities in the north of Australia, purportedly to protect indigenous children from sexual abuse. Many indigenous peoples pointed out that abuse issues were related to other socio-economic issues, such as poverty, unemployment, substance abuse and prior sexual abuse, and that the strategy targeted only indigenous Australians, not all Australians who had committed sexual abuse.[42]

C. Asia

49. In 2008, Viet Nam announced plans to integrate vocational training into boarding school curriculums in order to meet local needs. It also announced plans to provide free or subsidized education at the primary and secondary levels.[43] Viet Nam has also recently built four boarding schools for indigenous children and other disadvantaged children in Laos.[44]

50. The Chinese Constitution guarantees minorities the right to use and preserve their languages. China has one of the oldest and largest programmes of State-sponsored preferential policies for ethnic minorities. Minority students receive preferential consideration for admission to higher education. In certain regions, some schools have begun to consider the need to reflect the lifestyles of indigenous communities. They have adjusted their school years and holidays to correspond with migratory patterns and also encourage families to set up tents outside the

---

[40] See Roz Walker, et al., eds., *Indigenous Education and Social Capital: Influences on the Performance of Indigenous Tertiary Students* (Perth, Black Swan Press, 1998).

[41] See Australian Associated Press, "Fed: Boarding schools a win for remote communities: Macklin", 30 March 2008.

[42] See www.reconciliation.org.au.

[43] See Viet Nam News Agency, "Ethnic schools to include vocational training", 24 January 2008. Available from www.thanhniennews.com/education/?catid=4&newsid=35306.

[44] See Viet Nam News Agency, "Cooperation with Laos Continues to Develop", 11 November 2007.

schoolyards so that children have more regular contact with their parents and can still be part of the community life.[45]

51. Since 1980, the Government of India has devoted special attention to the education of tribal peoples through a number of policies. Given the diverse groups of tribal peoples in India, the State has developed district-specific plans for tribal education. In 1986, India's national policy on education specified that priority would be given to opening primary schools in tribal areas, developing curriculums in tribal languages for primary grades and switching to regional languages in later grades, encouraging tribal youth to become teachers in tribal areas, developing ashram, or residential, schools in tribal areas and developing incentive schemes, in keeping with the special needs of tribal peoples, in order to encourage them to attend school.[46]

52. In addition, India began to build more schools in areas with lower populations so that more tribal children could attend school near home.[46] The State announced plans in 2008 to open 100 boarding, or ashram, schools for tribal children in order to improve literacy rates. These schools will provide food as well as education. Families will not be required to contribute financially.[47] The sixth all-India educational survey of 1993 showed that 78 per cent of tribal populations and 56 per cent of tribal habitations have primary schools within the habitation regions. Eleven per cent of tribal populations and 20 per cent of tribal habitations now have schools within a one-kilometre radius. There are still 176,500 habitation regions without school facilities, however. Some of these children are being educated through ashram schools or alternative educational models.[48]

53. Nonetheless, scholars report that problems still exist in ashram schools, which are often inadequately furnished and supplied. The curriculum is often not relevant to the lives and cultures of tribal peoples, and teachers often come from non-tribal backgrounds and are inadequately skilled. Children are inadequately nourished, and are frequently absent in order to fulfil social roles within their communities.[48] There are also complaints about gender disparity in such schools, where girls are often taught in their own languages for purposes of returning back to their communities, while boys are taught in English with the purpose of promoting social and economic advancement.[49]

---

[45] See Åshild Kolås and Monika P. Thowsen, "Dilemmas of education in Tibetan areas outside the Tibet Autonomous Region", in *China at the Turn of the 21st Century* (Stockholm, Nordic Association for China Studies, 2002); Ellen Bangsbo, "Schooling for knowledge and cultural survival: Tibetan community schools in nomadic herding areas", *Educational Review*, vol. 60, No. 1 (February 2008); Catriona Bass, "Learning to love the motherland: educating Tibetans in China", *Journal of Moral Education*, vol. 34, No. 4 (December 2005); Bulag, "Mongolian Ethnicity and Linguistic Anxiety in China" (see footnote 28); and Johnson, "The politics, policies and practices in linguistic minority education" (see footnote 28).

[46] See Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, "Education of tribal children in India". Available from http://ssa.nic.in/research-studies/education_tribal_children.pdf.

[47] See Indo-Asian News Service, "Chhattisgarh to open 100 boarding schools for tribals", 16 May 2008. Available from http://indiaedunews.net.

[48] See G. Ananda, *Ashram Schools in Andhra Pradesh* (New Delhi, Commonwealth Publishers, 1994).

[49] See Bhupinder Singh and Neeti Mahanti, eds., *Tribal Education in India* (New Delhi, Inter-India Publications, 1995).

54. The educational programme of Malaysia's Department of Aboriginal Affairs seems to have been unsuccessful. In 1984, less than 30 per cent of indigenous children were literate. More than 70 per cent of children dropped out of school by the fifth grade. In 1995, responsibility for education was transferred to the Ministry of Education.[50] General complaints include the following: lack of proper buildings with basic utilities, ill-trained and unprepared teachers, lack of specialist teachers, overcrowded classrooms, inadequate hostel facilities, lack of supervision by the State and inadequate transportation.[51] Indigenous peoples also complain that sometimes their attempts to develop their own schools are declared illegal by the State.[52] By 1983, the medium of education for all schools was Bahasa Malaysia, with English as a mandatory second language. The teaching of indigenous languages is optional.[53] In 1990, Malaysia had 115,342 students in hostels in day schools and 2,953 in primary school hostels. Hostels in day schools provide accommodation to needy students, whereas central hostels care for students from schools in a particular district. Under a special programme, exceptional students can attend boarding schools in urban areas, in exchange for a nominal sum for food and boarding.[54] For the state of Sabah in particular, the Government established a foundation that provides scholarships. It has also built 10 district hostels, which house more than 1,000 students, and aims to provide a hostel in every district in the State.[51]

D. Latin America

55. During the second half of the twentieth century, national attitudes began to shift in many Latin American countries, such as Mexico, regarding indigenous peoples and languages. By the mid-1960s, the principle of early literacy in native languages plus the teaching of Spanish as a second language had become the official policy of the Government of Mexico. In the 1970s, a growing demand that whole educational programmes in larger indigenous communities should be truly bilingual and bicultural emerged. The goal is to have all subjects in primary school taught in the indigenous language where it is spoken by the local majority. Spanish is to be introduced as a second language.

56. In March 1975, Peru officially recognized Quechua as an official language of the country, allowing legal proceedings to be conducted in that language. The Ministry of Education was mandated to provide "all necessary support for institutions engaged in the teaching and promotion of the language in question". The teaching of Quechua is declared to be compulsory at all levels of education. In 1992, the Plurinational State of Bolivia began implementing a bilingual education programme in Guaraní, Aymara and Quechan communities. In the same year, Paraguay started mandating the teaching of Spanish and Guaraní at the elementary,

---

[50] See Sugan Sharma, *Educational Opportunities and Tribal Children* (Shiva Publishers Distribution, 1996); Dentan, et al., *Malaysia and the "Original People"*.

[51] See F. Mail, "A study of educational problems in Malaysia with particular reference to Sabah", Master's thesis, University of Hull, 4 March 1984.

[52] See Cordillera Peoples Alliance, et al., *Indigenous Peoples and Local Government: Experiences from Malaysia and the Philippines* (Copenhagen, International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, 2005).

[53] See Hyacinth Gaudart, *Bilingual Education in Malaysia* (Townsville, Australia, James Cook University, 1992).

[54] See Ministry of Education of Malaysia, *Education in Malaysia 1989* (Kuala Lumpur, 1990).

secondary and university levels. In Nicaragua, the Atlantic Coast Autonomy Law recognized the right of the Atlantic Coast communities to preserve their cultural identity and their languages. It dictates that members of these indigenous communities are entitled to be educated in their own languages, through programmes which take into account their historical heritage, their traditions and the characteristics of their environment, all within the framework of the national educational system.[55] In some countries, however, indigenous children must go to boarding school to obtain an education. In Suriname, indigenous children can attend local schools for primary grades but can only attend secondary schools if they leave their homes at the age of 11 to attend boarding schools in the capital, Paramaribo. Parents are also charged fees that they often cannot afford. Consequently, many children, especially girls, do not receive a secondary school education.[27]

57. It is important to note that, even in similar regions, indigenous peoples have diverse ideas about education, requiring that there be real community input. For instance, in the Peruvian Amazon, the Arakmbut peoples have expressed little interest in making boarding schools bilingual. Some groups feel that they can teach indigenous languages at home, and that indigenous languages cannot be taught adequately in Government-sponsored schools. They see schooling as having a very limited function designed to allow some community members to negotiate with the larger society. Still other groups whose languages are endangered want bilingual education because they feel that this may be the only means of preserving their languages.[9]

E. Russian Federation

58. Since 1985, there has been a reversal of the policies of forced assimilation. The First Congress of National Minorities took place in the Russian Federation in 1990. School classes began reintroducing indigenous languages into the curriculum. Many alternatives to the system were explored, such as shutting down the schools and educating children at home or utilizing mobile teaching structures so that children could continue to be part of herding brigades without missing out on their education.

59. Since then, however, federal funding for education and other basic needs that would have allowed for more fundamental reorganization in the educational sector has been curtailed. Interestingly, many indigenous peoples now see boarding schools as potential sites for cultural revitalization. Some indigenous families now say that indigenous cultures and languages can be taught in residential schools, whereas it may not occur in regular town schools. In addition, the specific needs of indigenous children are not being met in integrated schools, where they also face racism. Thus, ironically, it is often indigenous peoples who emphasize the need to integrate into the larger society that oppose residential schools, while those who support cultural survival argue that residential schools can be sites for indigenous revitalization.[23]

---

[55] See Colin Brock and Hugh Lawlor, eds., *Education in Latin America* (Beckenham, United Kingdom, Croom Helm Ltd., 1985); Gvirtz and Beech, *Going to School in Latin America*.

F. Scandinavia

60. Indigenous peoples seem to have been making impressive gains in many Scandinavian countries, especially in public education. In Norway, Sami was again allowed as a language of instruction in primary schools in 1959. In 1969, Norwegian legislation formalized the right of children of Sami-speaking parents in Sami districts to be instructed in the language of the indigenous community.

61. In the 1980s, all three Scandinavian countries began to elaborate legal guarantees with respect to the right to use the Sami language. Norway, with the largest population of Sami, adopted the first Sami language law in 1990, followed by Finland in 1991. Sweden has been much less proactive in this regard. All three States have directly elected Sami parliaments, which came into being in Finland in 1973, in Norway in 1987 and in Sweden in 1993. Although these are strictly consultative bodies, the fact that they are elected does give them weight with legislators when they are faced with issues of importance to the Sami peoples.[56]

G. Africa

62. Many indigenous groups in Africa see some form of boarding school system as the only option, particularly for nomadic peoples that do not have set migratory patterns. Because there may be low attendance, some areas are looking to experiment with local feeder schools that might increase the demand for boarding schools.

63. Eritrea has increased financial allocations to regional educational offices. This funding is used to sensitize nomadic groups on the need to send children to schools, change the school calendar in keeping with the demands of nomadic indigenous communities and increase teacher allowances. These offices are also encouraging the teaching of indigenous languages, involving grass-roots organizations in teaching and recruiting female teachers to attract female learners. A "para-boarding" system has been developed to assist nomadic indigenous children with elementary schooling. There are three such facilities in which a committee that includes local education officials and community elders manages each facility. Villages and the local administration contribute the shelter, food and other supplies.[57]

64. There are 10 boarding schools in Djibouti, although only a few are operating. Generally, nomadic groups are reluctant to send their children to schools. In addition, they are often reluctant to send girls because of concerns for the girls' safety. Dormitories are criticized for being poorly equipped and managed. There is also low community engagement in school policy.[57] In addition, there are informal boarding school practices. For example, nomadic families in Djibouti are often placed with urban families. This has led to a dependence of rural families on families in urban areas and an exodus of the younger generation to the cities.

---

[56] See Fernand de Varennes, "Indigenous Peoples and Language", *Murdoch University Electronic Journal of Law*, vol. 2, No. 1 (April 1995).

[57] See Roy Carr-Hill, et al., *The Education of Nomadic Peoples in East Africa: Synthesis Report* (Paris, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); Tunis, African Development Bank, 2005).

65. In Botswana, in order to address the problem of geographical isolation, the children of the San/Basarwa people are moved to hostels from which the Government transports the children to school every term. In this way, the children get basic schooling, although not in their native languages. These "remote area dweller hostels" tend be very unsympathetic places for San students. The idea of separating parents and children is foreign to San culture, and the pain and alienation that San students feel at boarding schools can be acute.[58]

66. Within the African continent, schools are often looked upon with suspicion as an attempt to keep nomadic groups in one place, although there are some nomadic groups that may seek expanded economic opportunities and have a desire to become more integrated into the dominant society, particularly in northern and north-eastern Kenya. Some feel that schooling alienates children from their communities and does not allow them to learn the skills they need to function in their own context. There is a saying that "Children go to schools empty and come out empty".[57]

H. New Zealand

67. Numerous court decisions have confirmed that the Maori language is protected under the Waitangi Treaty. Maori was made an official language in 1987, and legislation was adopted in order to fulfil obligations with respect to the Maori language. In particular, courts, broadcasting systems and educational systems were called on not to overemphasize English and to provide adequate protection for the Maori language.[59]

III. Conclusion

68. As a whole, boarding schools were generally a failure at improving the lives of indigenous peoples. The reason is that their purpose was not to benefit indigenous peoples; rather, it was to forcibly assimilate indigenous children into the larger society. Consequently, the dictates of the larger society took precedence over the needs of indigenous peoples. In addition, the fact that boarding school attendance was often mandatory deprived indigenous peoples of their right to self-determination.

69. Within these overall trends, however, there are individual success stories, as well as unintended beneficial consequences. For instance, there were individual administrators and teachers in boarding schools who did work for the betterment of indigenous children. Many complex issues remain, however. In some areas where Christianization had already begun, indigenous peoples had already begun to internalize self-destructive behaviours such as abuse. In addition, forced relocations had already economically marginalized many indigenous communities so that they could not sustain themselves. Consequently, for some children, boarding schools were an improvement from the conditions under which they had been living. Of

[58] See International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, *Report of the African Commission's Working Group of Experts on Indigenous Populations/Communities: Mission to the Republic of Botswana, 15-23 June 2005* (Copenhagen, 2005).

[59] See New Zealand History Online, "Waitangi Tribunal Claim -- Maori Language Week". Available from www.nzhistory.net.nz.

course, this "success" has to be read in the context of larger social failures to respect the rights of indigenous peoples in all aspects of their lives.

70. An unintended consequence of some boarding schools, such as those in the United States and Canada, was that they brought together people from diverse indigenous communities. This process helped to develop a pan-indigenous consciousness that gave rise to the birth of many indigenous rights organizations and movements in these countries.

71. Ironically, given the damage done by boarding schools, some indigenous peoples now look to boarding schools as a way of addressing the past assimilationist policies of these schools. Given these legacies, indigenous-specific educational institutions, including boarding schools, may be necessary to reverse the processes of colonization.

72. At the same time, one reason why boarding schools often appear to be an answer is because educational policy cannot be addressed separately from the larger context of economic, social and cultural domination; that is, if indigenous peoples continue to live in societies in which their traditional ways of life are marginalized or in which they face economic domination, then it follows that they will require educational systems that come from within the dominant society in order to survive.

73. There are many lessons to be learned from boarding schools. It is clear that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to education, because different indigenous communities want different things from formal education. Consequently, it is necessary to be creative and innovative in terms of developing policies that meet the needs of diverse indigenous communities. It is important that there be opportunities for indigenous communities to develop their own schools and that adequate resources and funding be available to support such initiatives.

74. For nomadic indigenous peoples, even when there is an attempt to build flexible school schedules around migratory patterns, the design of these schedules is not based on the specific patterns of particular groups. On a more positive note, the country of Eritrea is experimenting with "para", or more informal, boarding school systems that are developed in collaboration with indigenous communities. Furthermore, it has been found that school feeding programmes in East Africa often attract more children to schools.

75. In the United States, some native communities have taken over boarding schools and have adapted the curriculums accordingly. In the United States, New Zealand and other places, indigenous communities are looking to boarding schools as potential places to teach indigenous languages, particularly in areas where the language might be endangered. Indigenous-specific boarding or other schools might be more effective institutions to accomplish this goal than mixed public schools.

76. One generally positive example is that of boarding schools in Mongolia, in which enrolment went from nearly nil to almost 100 per cent between 1950 and 1990. During that period, participants claim that those who organized the schools did not try to assimilate them or ridicule indigenous identity. While the curriculum was designed by the central State, the actual administrators circumvented the curriculum in order to make it relevant to the community. Education was free, and many of the instructors were locally based. Children were allowed to start school at a later age in order to ensure that they had been socialized in their pastoral context and had acquired basic skills to build on during school holidays. Since the collapse

of the Soviet Union, however, funding for Mongolian schools has declined; as a result, participation in these schools is declining.[35]

77. The recent apologies and inquiries conducted by Australia and Canada open an opportunity to discuss the legacy of boarding schools and ways in which Government can redress their negative impacts. Canada has already authorized reparation measures and Australia, in its *Bringing Them Home* report,[14] recommended that monetary compensation be provided to people affected by forcible removal. Other countries could use these efforts as a model to begin a reconciliation process between indigenous peoples negatively impacted by boarding schools on a multigenerational level and the nation States in which they reside.

78. While there may lessons learned from past boarding school polices, there are still areas for concern. In areas where boarding school policies were particularly brutal, it does not seem possible to address present-day educational inequity without a Government response to past abuses. When multiple generations of indigenous peoples are affected by the sexual, physical and emotional abuse they suffered in schools, they are not in a position to build vibrant communities unless healing can take place. Also, without addressing past abuses, there will be continued suspicion of any Government-sponsored educational programmes.

79. There must be opportunities for indigenous communities to be more actively consulted and involved in the development of suitable educational programmes. Some, particularly those in herding, nomadic or remote communities, will desire to maintain boarding schools. Others may desire their complete abolition (in some countries, such as Canada, they have already been abolished), but indigenous communities need to become active participants in developing the curriculums and structures of schools depending on their needs.

80. In addition, in areas where educational facilities are sparse, some countries, such as Uganda, are experimenting with non-formal educational processes and mobile teaching centres. Where countries are resource-poor, it is necessary to consider alternative ways of providing education that may be different from mainstream models or those used in developed countries.[35]

81. Concerns still exist that funding for indigenous education continues to be inadequate, particularly in geographically remote areas, where boarding schools may not be publicly subsidized and teachers are often poorly trained. In many areas, indigenous peoples do not receive education past the primary school level. There is still a concern among many indigenous peoples that the purpose of indigenous boarding schools is to further the cultural eradication and assimilation of indigenous peoples. Further, in many areas indigenous peoples are not actively consulted in the development of educational programmes.

82. While there is an increasing emphasis on bilingual education in indigenous schools, this policy is of limited use if the affairs of that State are still conducted in the dominant language. A positive example is the fact that some Latin American countries are mandating that not only educational institutions be bilingual, but that all levels of society should become bilingual.

83. In areas where boarding schools may be necessary, there is the concern of how to address the social and family disruptions that result when children leave their homes to attend schools on a residential basis. A positive example is in China, where administrators are experimenting with the format and structure of residential schools

so that they are less disruptive to minority family, social and economic patterns. They are also allowing families to live near the schools.

84. In conflict-ridden areas, there are insufficient safeguards to ensure the safety of children in boarding schools, particularly girls. To address safety concerns, it could be wise to open single-sex schools in some areas where communities desire such policies. As other case studies demonstrate, however, many indigenous communities do not support single-sex education.

85. While boarding schools may be problematic, integrated public schools are sometimes equally problematic. In these schools, indigenous children often face extreme forms of racism and are subjected to culturally irrelevant or insensitive curriculums.

86. Gender disparities in boarding school education continue to be an issue in some countries. As pointed out in the present document, boys are often more likely than girls to attend schools that emphasize academic education that enables them to take advantage of economic opportunity.

87. Overall, in considering the relationship between maintaining the cultural identities of indigenous peoples and eradicating educational gaps between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples, it is clear that primary and secondary educational policies cannot be separated from larger systemic issues; that is, if the surrounding society does not allow for higher education in indigenous languages or provide job opportunities for indigenous peoples, there will always be a conflict between providing quality education that allows for societal advancement and the preservation of the cultures and languages of indigenous peoples.